

# Shigellosis

## **What is shigellosis?**

Shigellosis can be a severe bacterial disease, especially in children. It involves the intestinal tract.

## **Who gets shigellosis?**

Anyone can get shigellosis. Most cases occur in children younger than 10.

## **How is shigellosis spread?**

Shigellosis is spread by direct or indirect contact with the stool of an infected person. It usually is spread by people who do not properly wash their hands after bowel movements. It may be spread through contaminated food or water. Flies and dogs may spread the disease.

## **What are the symptoms of shigellosis?**

Symptoms include diarrhea with fever, nausea and sometimes vomiting and cramps.

## **How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms usually occur within 12 to 96 hours (usually one to three days) and up to one week after exposure.

## **When and for how long is a person able to spread shigellosis?**

The disease may be spread during the severe infection and until the infecting agent is no longer present in feces, usually within four weeks of infection. People without symptoms of disease may spread the disease to others.

## **Does past infection make a person immune?**

A person may have shigellosis more than once since there are many forms of the bacteria that cause the disease.

## **What complications can happen from shigellosis?**

Complications may include colon complications, convulsions, blood problems and sometimes death. Severity of the disease may depend upon age, pre-existing state of nutrition and type of bacteria causing disease.

## **What is the treatment for shigellosis?**

Antibiotics may shorten the length and severity of the illness. Fluid and nutrient replacement is important for those who are very ill.

## **What can be done to prevent the spread of shigellosis?**

Infected individuals should not handle food or provide child or patient care until fecal samples are clear. Wash hands with soap and water after bathroom use and before preparing food. Since this disease occurs so frequently in young children, childcare providers should take particular care in:

- Proper hand washing after diapering and toilet assistance and before handling food.
- Proper handling and storage of soiled clothing.
- Proper disposal of diapers.
- Disinfecting potty chairs, diaper changing surfaces, and possibly contaminated articles such as toys, furniture and pacifiers.
- Washing children's hands after toileting and before eating.

